

Message Text

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TAGS: NATO, UR, XA

SUBJECT: UK ANALYSIS OF SOVIET AFRICAN POLICY

REF: USNATO 7194

1. THE DEPARTMENT APPRECIATES THE OPPORTUNITY TO COMMENT
ON THE VERY THOUGHTFUL PAPER ON SOVIET POLICY TOWARD
AFRICA SUBMITTED BY THE BRITISH REPRESENTATIVE. WE AGREE
WITH THE PAPER'S DESCRIPTION OF RECENT SOVIET BEHAVIOR
IN AFRICA AND WITH THE REASONING ABOUT PROBABLE SOVIET
MOTIVATIONS. AT THIS POINT, SOME SIX MONTHS LATER, IT IS
USEFUL TO ASSESS THE REASONS BEHIND SOVIET ACTIONS
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FOLLOWING THE SUCCESS OF SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION IN THE
OGADEN.

2. IN DISCUSSING SOVIET MOTIVATIONS, THE PAPER RAISES
THE KEY QUESTION OF WHETHER COUNTERMEASURES TAKEN IN
THE EAST-WEST CONTEXT ARE MORE EFFECTIVE IN RESTRAINING
SOVIET BEHAVIOR THAN THOSE IN THE AFRICAN CONTEXT. IN

ANSWER, IT CONCLUDES WITH THE STATEMENT THAT SOVIET READINESS TO EXPLOIT AFRICAN SITUATIONS TO THE DIS-ADVANTAGE OF THE WEST IS NOT SUFFICIENTLY STRONG TO OVERRIDE THE OCCASIONAL NEED FOR RESTRAINT IN THE INTEREST OF THEIR OVERALL RELATIONS WITH THE WEST. THIS MEANS THAT ON OCCASION THE SOVIETS HAVE FOREGONE ATTEMPTS TO

ACHIEVE THEIR POLICY OBJECTIVES IN DEFERENCE TO OFFENDING WESTERN SENSIBILITIES AND PRESERVING DETENTE.

3. IN OUR VIEW SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIONS IN AFRICA HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY A TRIAD OF REGIONAL FACTORS WHICH HAVE PLAYED A SIGNIFICANT ROLE IN RESTRAINING SOVIET BEHAVIOR IN AFRICA. THESE INCLUDE POSITIONS TAKEN BY AFRICAN STATES, BY OTHER STATES (PRINCIPALLY ARAB), AS WELL AS THOSE TAKEN BY WESTERN COUNTRIES.

4. FUNDAMENTALLY, IT IS THE CHANGING AFRICAN ATTITUDES TOWARD SOVIET/CUBAN INTERVENTION AND THE ABSENCE OF ANY NEW OPPORTUNITIES WHICH HAS CAUSED THE SOVIETS TO BE SOMEWHAT RESTRAINED IN RECENT MONTHS. THIS CHANGE HAS BEEN HELPED ALONG BY THE SUCCESS OF WESTERN DIPLOMATIC INITIATIVES TOWARD AFRICA (PARTICULARLY NAMIBIA) AND INCREASED WESTERN ATTENTION TO PROBLEMS FACED BY THE AFRICAN STATES. WESTERN DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS LIKE THOSE WHICH FACILITATED A RECONCILIATION BETWEEN ZAIRE AND

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ANGOLA HAVE DEMONSTRATED TO AFRICAN LEADERS THAT THEY HAVE A CLEAR ALTERNATIVE TO RELIANCE ON SOVIET/CUBAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO RESOLVE REGIONAL DISPUTES. THE SUCCESS OF THESE EFFORTS IS REFLECTED IN THE STRONG STANCE TAKEN BY A NUMBER OF AFRICAN LEADERS IN THE RECENT OAU CONFERENCE.

5. IN HIS JUNE 20 SPEECH IN ATLANTIC CITY, SECRETARY VANCE RE-EMPHASIZED OUR BELIEF THAT THE PROBLEMS OF AFRICA SHOULD BE SETTLED BY AFRICANS IN AN AFRICAN CONTEXT. ONLY BY REMOVING FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES CAN WE PREVENT THE SOVIETS FROM EXPLOITING AFRICAN SITUATIONS TO THEIR OWN ADVANTAGE.

6. THE OPPOSITION OF OTHER COUNTRIES, PRINCIPALLY ARAB STATES, PROVIDES A SECOND COUNTERWEIGHT AGAINST FURTHER SOVIET/CUBAN ADVENTURES IN AFRICAN CONFLICTS. SOVIET ACTIONS IN ERITREA PRODUCED A STRONG REACTION FROM IRAQ AND SYRIA, WHICH HAVE CONTINUED TO SUPPORT THE ERITREAN REBELS. ADDED TO EARLIER OPPOSITION FROM SAUDI ARABIA EGYPT AND SUDAN TO SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIONS IN THE OGADEN, THIS CHANGE IN ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF MORE RADICAL STATES HAS CREATED A FORMIDABLE GROUP OF ARAB OPPONENTS WITH CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES AT THEIR

DISPOSAL. BEYOND THE ARAB CONCERNS, HOWEVER, IS A SOURING IN THE NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT TOWARD SOVIET/CUBAN ACTIVITIES. THE SOVIETS MOST CERTAINLY HAVE TAKEN NOTE OF THE CRITICISM OF THEIR ACTIONS FROM THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES OUTSIDE OF AFRICA.

7. IN A BROADER CONTEXT, ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE UNITED

STATES AND THE ALLIES HAVE PUT THE SOVIETS ON NOTICE THAT THEIR BEHAVIOR IN AFRICA IS UNACCEPTABLE. THIS IS PARTICULARLY TRUE IN THE CASE OF SOVIET ENCOURAGEMENT FOR ARMED ACTIONS ACROSS INTERNATIONAL BORDERS. THE WEST'S RAPID RESPONSE TO THE SHABA CRISIS WAS A FIRM REMINDER TO MOSCOW THAT THERE WERE LIMITS BEYOND WHICH SOVIET

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ACTIONS WOULD NOT BE TOLERATED.

CHRISTOPHER

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